

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A hardware card for insertion into a television tuning device having electronic program guide capability, the hardware card configured to enable the television tuning device to compatibly process encoded electronic program guide information, the encoded electronic program guide information being encoded to prevent use of the electronic program guide information at the television tuning device until the electronic program guide information has been purchased, comprising:

a case having a form factor;

a non-volatile memory situated within the case and having loadable data stored thereon that can be loaded onto the television tuning device ~~to enable the television tuning device to access one or more electronic program guides from one or more of a plurality of corresponding electronic program guide,~~ portions of the loadable data comprising a specification specifying settings for accessing a purchased portion of electronic program guide information over a corresponding transmission network along with settings for compatibly processing the purchased portion of encoded electronic program guide information, the loadable data including:

~~at least one~~ an indication of a communication mechanism URL corresponding to at least for communicating with the specified electronic program guide provider via the corresponding transmission network one server that provides information on how and where to contact the plurality of electronic program guide providers; and

~~additional identification distinguishing~~ information distinguishing the indicative of a type of purchased portion of electronic programming guide information from other electronic programming guide information maintained by the specified electronic program guide provider; and

means for providing the loadable data to the television tuning device, for enabling configuring the television tuning device to connect to the specified electronic program guide provider over the corresponding transmission network, for configuring the television tuning device to decode the purchased portion of electronic program guide information ~~at least one server~~ and for transferring the additional distinguishing information indicate to the specified

~~electronic program guide provider the at least one server the type of electronic program guide information that has been purchased; and~~

wherein the specified electronic program guide provider at least one server, upon being connected to by the television tuning device via the indicated communication mechanism, uses the additional ~~identification distinguishing~~ information obtained ~~from the hardware card to determine the type identify the purchased portion of~~ electronic program guide information from among other electronic program guide information maintained at the specified electronic program guide provider that has been purchased by a consumer of the card, and thereafter enables the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of one or more electronic program guides by ~~returning information as to how and where to receive the type of electronic program guide information purchased with the card and associated with the additional identification~~ information.

2. (Previously Presented) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the loadable data represents one or more loader programs for the television tuning device, each loader program corresponding to an electronic program guide provider.

3. (Cancelled).

4. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes specification of a transmission network over which encoded electronic program guide information is received from the electronic program guide provider to which the loader program corresponds.

5. (Original) The hardware card of claim 4, wherein the transmission network comprises at least one of: a dial-up modem, Ethernet, in-band, out-of-band, vertical-blanking interrupt (VBI).

6. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a database segment to transfer the loader program into the television tuning device.

7. (Original) The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a segment to provide a user interface.

8. (Previously Presented) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the loadable data represents non-executable information decodable by the television tuning device to access electronic program guide information from an electronic program guide provider.

9. (Original) The hardware card of claim 8, wherein the non-executable information is decodable by a decoder segment of the television tuning device.

10. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the non-volatile memory comprises flash memory.

11. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the television tuning device comprises a set-top box.

12. (Original) The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the form factor comprises one of: a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.

13. (Currently Amended) A television tuning system comprising:

a television tuning device including:

an outer case having a slot to accept a hardware card;

internal components hard-coded to a particular electronic program guide provider; and

other internal components configured to receive information loaded into the television tuning device from a hardware card inserted into the slot to allow for reception of electronic program guide information from other electronic program guide providers in addition to the particular electronic program guide provider hard coded into the internal components;

a hardware card configured to enable the television tuning device to compatibly process electronic program guide information, the electronic program guide information being encoded to prevent use of the electronic program guide information at the television tuning device until the electronic program guide information has been purchased, the hardware card including:

~~a hardware card having~~ an case having acceptable form factor for insertion into the slot, ~~the hardware card storing loadable information configured to allow the television tuning device to receive electronic program guide information from a corresponding one or more other electronic program guide providers, the one or more other electronic program guide providers being different than the particular electronic program guide provider that is hard-coded into the internal components, each of the one or more other electronic program guide providers being accessible over a corresponding one or more transmission networks respectively;~~

a non-volatile memory situated within the case and having loadable data stored thereon that can be loaded onto the television tuning device, portions of the loadable data comprising a specification specifying settings for accessing a purchased portion of electronic program guide information over a corresponding transmission network along with settings for compatibly processing the purchased portion of encoded electronic program guide information, the loadable data including:

an indication of a communication mechanism for communicating with the specified electronic program guide provider via the corresponding transmission network; and

additional distinguishing information distinguishing the purchased portion of electronic programming guide information from other electronic programming guide information maintained by the specified electronic program guide provider; and

~~one or more~~ a storage locations storing an electronic program guide loader program corresponding to ~~each of the one or more other~~ electronic program guide providers, ~~each the~~ stored electronic program guide loader program designed to access loadable information stored on the hardware card to configure the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of electronic program guide information from ~~one of the other~~ electronic program guide providers, ~~each the~~ stored electronic program guide loader program including:

an EPG decoding segment configured to use the loadable information to decode the purchased portion of ~~encoded~~ electronic program guide information received from ~~its corresponding~~ the specified electronic program guide provider ~~and to use loadable information to identify a specific~~ via the corresponding transmission network, ~~from among the one or more transmission networks, over which its encoded electronic program guide information is to be received;~~

a database segment configured to transfer the loadable data for its ~~corresponding~~ the electronic program guide provider into the other internal components; and

a user interface segment configured to displays instructions corresponding to what a user must do to load the loadable data for ~~its corresponding~~ the electronic program guide provider onto the television tuning device and to enable the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of electronic program guides information from ~~it's~~ the electronic program guide provider over the ~~specific corresponding~~ transmission network;

means for switching to ~~an the specified~~ electronic program provider ~~other than the particular electronic program guide provider that is hard coded into the internal~~

~~components, to access the purchased portion of electronic program guide information in~~
accordance with and in response to accessing the loadable information stored on the
hardware card; and

one or more connections within the outer case to communicatively couple the
television tuning device to a display.

14. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein the form factor comprises one of:
a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.

15. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein the hardware card has a non-
volatile memory on which non-executable information is stored that is decodable by a decoder
segment of the television tuning device, the non-executable information, when decoded by the
decoder segment, providing the device with the capability to receive the electronic program
guide information.

16. (Cancelled).

17. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

accepting an inserted hardware card into a slot of a television tuning device communicatively coupled to a display; and,

accessing data stored on the hardware card to enable the device to receive a purchased portion of electronic program guide information, ~~over a specified network~~, from an electronic program guide provider, wherein ~~said the purchased portion of~~ electronic program guide information is different than other electronic program guide information that the television tuning device was hard-coded to receive, such that accessing the data stored on the hardware card effectively enables the television tuning device to change ~~the type of~~ electronic program guide information received at the television tuning device;

wherein the data of the hardware card includes:

portions of loadable data comprising a specification specifying settings for accessing the purchased portion of encoded electronic program guide information over a corresponding transmission network along with settings for compatibly processing the purchased portion of encoded electronic program guide information, the loadable data including:

an indication of a communication mechanism for communicating with the specified electronic program guide provider via the corresponding transmission network; and

additional distinguishing information distinguishing the purchased portion of encoded electronic programming guide information from other electronic programming guide information maintained by the specified electronic program guide provider;

an EPG decoding segment ~~for each of the corresponding one or more the~~ specified electronic program guide providers, wherein ~~each the~~ EPG decoding segment includes means for decoding the purchased portion of encoded EPG information obtained from the ~~corresponding one or more specified~~ electronic program guide providers ~~and for identifying a specific via the corresponding transmission network, from among one or more transmission networks, over which encoded electronic program guide information is to be received;~~

a database segment having means for enabling transfer of the data from the hardware card onto the television tuning device such that the television tuning device can decode the purchased portion of encoded electronic program guide information received via the ~~specific corresponding~~ transmission network; and

a user interface segment which displays instructions corresponding to what a user must do to load the data on the television tuning device and to enable the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of one or more electronic program guides ~~information over a specified via the~~ corresponding transmission network; and

switching to the purchased an electronic program guide information provider ~~other than the electronic program guide provider the television tuner was hard-coded to receive~~ in accordance with and in response to accessing the data stored on the hardware card to override the display of existing electronic program guide information.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17, wherein accessing the data stored on the hardware card includes loading the data from the hardware card into the television tuning device.

19. (Cancelled).

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, further comprising removing the hardware card from the slot of the television tuning device.

21. (Previously Presented) A method of doing business comprising:
- offering a consumer one or more electronic program guide hardware cards for purchase, the cards able to be inserted into a corresponding slot of a television tuning device used by the consumer, each card enabling the television tuning device to switch access from a first electronic program guide provider that the television tuning device is programmed to access for obtaining electronic program guide information to a purchased portion of electronic program guide information from a different electronic program guide provider to obtain different electronic program guide information;
- purchasing, by the consumer, an electronic program guide hardware card for a desired ~~type of~~ electronic program guide information; and,
- loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card causes the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of ~~switch access from the first~~ electronic program guide information provider to the desired type of electronic guide provider in accordance with and in response to data stored in the purchased electronic program guide hardware card;
- wherein the data stored in the electronic program guide hardware card includes:
- portions of loadable data comprising a specification specifying settings for accessing the purchased portion of electronic program guide information over a corresponding transmission network along with settings for compatibly processing the purchased portion of electronic program guide information, the loadable data including:
- an indication of a communication mechanism for communicating with the specified electronic program guide provider via the corresponding transmission network; and
- additional distinguishing information distinguishing the purchased portion of electronic programming guide information from other electronic programming guide information maintained by the specified electronic program guide provider;
- an EPG decoding segment ~~for each of the corresponding one or more~~ specified electronic program guide providers, wherein ~~each the~~ EPG

decoding segment includes means for decoding ~~encoded~~ EPG he purchased portion electronic program guide information obtained from the ~~corresponding one or more~~ specified electronic program guide providers ~~and means for identifying a specific~~ via the corresponding transmission network, ~~from among one or more transmission networks, over which encoded electronic program guide information of the desired type is to be received;~~

a database segment having means for enabling transfer of the data onto the television tuning device such that the television tuning device can decode ~~encoded~~ the purchased portion of electronic program guide information ~~of the desired type~~ received via the ~~specific~~ corresponding transmission network; and

a user interface segment which displays instructions corresponding to what a user must do to load the data one the television tuning device and to enable the television tuning device to access the purchased portion of one or more electronic program guides ~~information of the desired type over via~~ the specified corresponding transmission network.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by the consumer.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by a merchant.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further initially comprising receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes purchasing of the television tuning device by the consumer.

26. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes providing of the television tuning device by a merchant to the consumer free-of-charge to the consumer.

27. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes receiving by the consumer of an electronic program guide hardware card along with the television tuning device.

28. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising accessing a provider server by the television tuning device to receive the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card inserted into the television tuning device.

29. (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising, as part of the purchasing by the consumer of the electronic program guide hardware card, registering the hardware card with a provider server to indicate the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card.

30. (Cancelled).

31. (Previously Presented) A hardware card as recited in claim 1, wherein the hardware card further includes information specifying to a user what the user must do to load, to the television tuning device, the data that enables the television tuning device to access the one or more electronic program guides.

32. (Previously Presented) A hardware card as recited in claim 31, wherein the information specifies that the user must enter at least one of a credit card number and an authentication code.

33-35. (Cancelled).

36. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein each of the said electronic program guide provider and the said another electronic program guide provider encode the electronic program guide information differently.

37. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 17, wherein the type of electronic program guide information corresponds to a type of quality.

38. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 18, wherein each of the said electronic program guide provider and the said another electronic program guide provider encode the electronic program guide information differently.

39. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 21, wherein the first electronic program guide provider supplied the television tuning device to the consumer.

40. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the server enables the television tuning device to access the one or more electronic program guides by providing the one or more electronic program guides to the tuning device.

41. (Previously Presented) A method as recited in claim 17, further including:
a server, upon being connected to by the television tuning device, using identification information obtained from the hardware card to determine a type of programming information that has been purchased by a consumer of the card, and that thereafter provides the one or more electronic program guides to the television tuning device.

42. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 17, wherein the hardware card ~~corresponds to a level of quality associated with the specified transmission network~~ additional distinguishing information indicates a level of quality of the purchased portion of electronic program guide information